United Nations A/CONF.199/18

General Assembly

Distr.: General
4 September 2002

Original: English

Agenda item 9
General debate

Letter dated 4 September 2002 from the Chairman of the Fourth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Alliance of Small Island States to the Secretary-General of the World Summit on Sustainable Development

I have the honour to write to you in my capacity as Chairman of the Fourth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Alliance of Small Island States, which was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 1 September 2002. The Summit adopted a communiqué (see annex).* I have been requested by the Summit to transmit this communiqué to you and to request that it be circulated as a document of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

(*Signed*) Tuila'epa Sailele **Malielegaoi**
Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Independent State of Samoa
Chairman of the Fourth Summit of Heads of State and Government
of the Alliance of Small Island States

* The annex is being circulated in the language of submission only.

02-57928 (E) 240902

Annex to the letter dated 4 September 2002 from the Chairman of the Fourth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Alliance of Small Island States to the Secretary-General of the World Summit on Sustainable Development

Communiqué
Fourth Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Alliance of Small Island States

Adopted at Johannesburg, South Africa, on 1 September 2002

1. The Heads of State and Government of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) met on 1 September 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September, 2002. The meeting was chaired by H.E. The Honourable Tuila'epa Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Independent State of Samoa, and was attended by: H.E. Mr. Pedro Verona Rodrigues Pires, President of the Republic of Cape Verde, H.E. Colonel Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of Comoros, H.E. Dr. Robert Woonton, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, H.E. The Honourable Pierre Charles, Prime Minister of Dominica, H.E. The Honourable Leo A. Falcam, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, H.E. The Honourable Laisenia Qarase, Prime Minister of the Republic of the Fiji Islands, H.E. Mr. Teburoro Tito, President of the Republic of Kiribati, H.E. The Honourable Kessai H. Note, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, H.E. The Honourable Sir Anerood Jugnauth, KCMG, PC, QC, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, H.E. The Honourable Tommy E. Remengesau Jr., President of the Republic of Palau, H.E. Mr. Fradique B. Melo de Menezes, President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, and H.E. The Honourable Saufatu Sopoaga, OBE, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Immigration and Labour of Tuvalu.

2. The meeting was also attended by the following Heads of Delegation of AOSIS member States: H.E. The Honourable John Briceño, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Natural Resources and Environment of Belize and Vice-Chairman of the Summit, H.E. The Honourable Toke Talagi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment of Niue, H.E. The Honourable Snyder Rini, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for National Planning and Development of the Solomon Islands, H.E. The Honourable James Cecil Cocker, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Environment of the Kingdom of Tonga, H.E. The Honourable Fredrick A. Mitchell, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Public Service of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, H.E. The Honourable Elizabeth Thompson, Minister for Physical Development and Environment of Barbados, H.E. Mr. Felipe Pérez Roque, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, H.E. Mr. Costas Themistocleous, Minister for Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment of the Republic of Cyprus, H.E. The Honourable Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen, Minister of Health of Grenada, H.E. Mr. S.R. Insanally, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guyana, H.E. M. Joseph Philippe Antoine, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Haiti, H.E. Senator A.J. Nicholson, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Jamaica, H.E. Mr. Hussain Shihab, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives, The Honorable George Pullicino, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs and Environment of Malta, H.E. The Right Honourable Sir Rabbie L. Namaliu, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration, Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea,

H.E. The Honourable Dr. Timothy Harris, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis, H.E. The Honourable Julian R. Hunt, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Saint Lucia, H.E. The Honourable Douglas Slater, Minister for Health and the Environment of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, H.E. Mr. Ronny Jurneau, Minister for Environment of Seychelles, H.E. Mr. Lim Swee Say, Minister for the Environment of the Republic of Singapore, The Honourable Clifford Paul Marcia, Minister of Labour, Technological Development and Environment of Suriname, H.E. The Honourable Ronnie Dumas, Senator, Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, H.E. Mr. Carlyle Corbin, Minister of State for External Affairs of the United States Virgin Islands, and H.E. Ambassador Dr. John W. Ashe, Head of Delegation of Antigua and Barbuda.

3. The meeting was addressed by Mr. Nitin Desai, Secretary General of the WSSD, Mr. Anwarul K. Chowdury, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Countries and Small Island Developing States.

4. The following special guests or their representatives and observers were also in attendance: Mr. Mark Malloch Brown, Administrator of the United Nations Development Program, Dr. Klaus Topfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Development Program, Mr. Mohamed T. El-Ashry, Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Global Environment Facility, Ms. JoAnne DiSano, Director, Division for Sustainable Development, United Nations, Mr. Manuel B. Dengo, Chief of the Water, Natural Resources and Small Island Developing States Branch, United Nations, Ms. Paola Deda, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Dr. Pa'o Luteru, Assistant Secretary General, African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, Mr. Byron Blake, Assistant Secretary General of the Caribbean Community, H.E. The Right Honourable Don McKinnon, Secretary General of the Commonwealth Secretariat, Mr. Raj Mohabeer, Indian Ocean Commission, Mr. Iosefa Maiava, Deputy Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum, Dr. Russell Howorth, Deputy Director, South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission, Mr. Tamari'i Tutangata, Director, South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, Mr. Rajesh Chandra, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of the South Pacific, Professor Albert Binger, University of the West Indies Center for Environment and Development, and representatives of Pacific Concerns Resource Center, World Wide Fund for Nature, and the Anglican Mission to the United Nations.

5. We, the Heads of State and Government and representatives of AOSIS express great satisfaction with the agreement on the special provisions contained in Chapter VII of the draft Plan of Implementation for the WSSD on the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States. The section elaborates the special case for Small Island Developing States in the context of sustainable development.

6. We note with appreciation the substantive and constructive role that AOSIS delegations have played throughout the WSSD and its preparatory process.

7. We acknowledge the continued efforts of Small Island Developing States for sustainable development and the need for full and effective implementation of Chapter VII. The experience of the past decade reveals considerable constraints now exacerbated by, amongst other things, increasing vulnerability and the emerging challenges of HIV/AIDS, poverty, climate change, continued environmental degradation, trade and economic marginalisation and the need to harness the opportunities provided by the rapidly advancing information and communication technologies.

8. We express our determination to put in place a long-term strategy for the effective implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action in order to overcome these constraints and achieve sustainable development through national action, regional cooperation and international support. We commit ourselves to sustainable development that is effective and

irreversible. This will require particular attention to capacity building, resource mobilisation, securing adequate health standards and job creation.

9. We reviewed the current concerns to Small Island Developing States, and highlight the following as particularly pressing:

i. We recognize that the special case for Small Island Developing States in environment and development captures the unique circumstances of the **vulnerability** of Small Island Developing States. Developing the capacity to manage vulnerability, strengthen food security and build resilience to economic, social and environmental shocks is urgent and we call on the international community to support the efforts of Small Island Developing States;

ii. In respect of **capacity building** we reiterate our call for the international community to support and strengthen existing and new capacity building efforts of Small Island Developing States in all their aspects, and to strengthen co-operation among Small Island Developing States;

iii. We urge the international community to put in place appropriate mechanisms to support Small Island Developing States in their efforts to adjust to **globalization and trade** liberalization, and call on the WTO to recognize the special situation of Small Island Developing States and ensure that in the elaboration of its Work Program on Small Economies as a follow-up to the Doha Ministerial Declaration it takes due account of the difficulties encountered by Small Island Developing States including effective operationalization of special and differential treatment and capacity building initiatives, and in this respect we welcome the provision made in the draft Plan of Implementation of WSSD for small economies;

iv. **Water** is essential for life. The economic and social wellbeing of Small Island Developing States are dependent upon the quality and quantity of fresh water and adequate sanitation, and we call on the international community to support the development and strengthening of capacity to effectively manage the water and sanitation sectors which is constrained by small size and limited human resources and inadequate infrastructure;

v. We are deeply concerned about the adverse impacts of **climate change** and sea-level rise that are already being experienced by Small Island Developing States and the severe hardships associated with increasing climate variability, and call for urgent international and domestic action to address climate change and its consequences, including the early ratification, entry into force and implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, greater public awareness and mobilization of resources for adaptation;

vi. The protection and preservation of the **biological diversity** of Small Island Developing States is urgent and we call for international assistance to enhance the capability of Small Island Developing States to promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;

vii. We recognize the increasing impacts, including costs and loss of lives, of **natural disasters** in Small Island Developing States and urge the international community to support efforts to develop and strengthen national and regional capacities for the assessment, early warning and mitigation of these impacts;

viii. **Land degradation** and drought, and the consequences of the loss of agricultural production seriously compromise efforts to achieve poverty reduction and the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States, and we urge the international community

to increase its financial and technical support to the implementation of initiatives under the UN Convention to Combat Desertification;

ix. We are resolved to seek and to establish global **sustainable energy** partnerships that can ensure that adequate, affordable and environmentally safe energy is available to promote the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States, and promote renewable energy and energy efficiency.

x. We recognize that as custodians of vast **ocean** areas Small Island Developing States have special responsibilities. Technological and financial assistance is required to ensure that Small Island Developing States are able to manage their ocean areas, including the sustainable development of ocean resources and the protection of ocean health, and the provision of the means for monitoring and controlling the use of coastal and marine resources;

xi. We acknowledge that tourism is one of the most important economic sectors in most of our countries. Nevertheless, many environmental, cultural and socially degrading effects of tourism are adversely impacting Small Island Developing States, and we call on all countries to re-commit themselves to the principles of **sustainable tourism**, with an emphasis on product diversification, and for programmes of implementation, along the lines adopted in stakeholder communities in Small Island Developing States;

xii. We urge the multilateral development financial community to consider augmenting the quantum of resources devoted to **financing sustainable development** and in this connection we urge the developed partners to be more responsive to agreed official development assistance targets. We note with appreciation the success in efforts for the replenishment of the resources of the GEF, which is a committed and reliable partner in financing sustainable development in Small Island Developing States;

xiii. We regard international cooperation on **taxation** issues as important, and there should be provisions for our participation in the international rule-making process, to ensure transparency and non-discrimination in the implementation of regulation, operation and best practices;

xiv. We note with concern that the **HIV/AIDS** pandemic continues to be a major challenge for Small Island Developing States, and call for intensified international and regional efforts, including steps to ensure access to affordable treatment and medication;

xv. Management of **wastes** is a serious constraint for Small Island Developing States, with the resulting hazard to human health and the coastal zone, and we therefore call on the international community, including international financial institutions, to assist Small Island Developing States in developing and implementing programs and projects in this sector, as well as in the full implementation of initiatives listed in the Draft Plan of Implementation of the WSSD; and

xvi. We recognize that **transportation and communications**, both domestic and international, is an essential element to sustainable development in all sectors and we call for programs to develop comprehensive transportation and communication capacities in Small Island Developing States.

10. We express to all our international partners and donor countries, to the United Nations agencies and all other international organizations our appreciation for their continuing support and assistance.

11. We look forward to the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the support of the international community in the preparations at national, regional and inter-regional levels for the convening of an international meeting to review the Barbados Programme of Action in 2004.

12. We recognise the special value of regional and inter-regional cooperation amongst Small Island Developing States and the role performed by their regional organizations and educational institutions, as well as the science and technology institutes and call for further strengthening of links between these organisations for sustainable development. We also encourage the pursuit of further regional and inter-regional cooperation amongst and between AOSIS member States.

13. We reaffirm our strong support for the United Nations SIDS Unit, and call for its strengthening as the focal point for Small Island Developing States within the United Nations system.

14. We resolve to promote sustainable economic growth and the implementation of policies addressing poverty and social inequality, including through the development of urban and rural micro-enterprises and job creation.

15. We express gratitude to member States that have hosted AOSIS workshops and meetings of experts. We also express our appreciation to the Chairman of AOSIS and all AOSIS officials who have worked tirelessly to accomplish the mandates and goals of AOSIS in many international negotiations. AOSIS should continue to strengthen its advocacy role, including in the preparations for the proposed Barbados+10 Conference.

16. We reaffirm our agreement to exchange views at future international meetings to ensure that AOSIS remains a forum to promote the shared interests of its member States, and to strengthen cooperation among Small Island Developing States.

17. We welcome the offer by the Government of the Republic of Mauritius to host the international meeting to review the implementation of the Barbados Program of Action in 2004 with warm gratitude, and take note of the interest of the Government of the Commonwealth of Bahamas and the Government of the Republic of Cape Verde to host preparatory and expert meetings respectively.

18. We offer to the Government and People of the Republic of South Africa our warmest gratitude and congratulations for the fine arrangements for the WSSD.

Done at Johannesburg, 1 September 2002.